



FIRST-SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING

JANUARY 2019 • SACRED RHYTHMS OF PRAYER

... you are a temple of the Holy Spirit.¹

By your very nature, you are a place of prayer. Prayer happens in you. The mystery of God fills your whole Being.

Prayer, both personal and communal, centers our life in mission – in our relationship with God ...²

Each day we encounter life through one another and through the changing faces of nature and the community of life. News and events occurring around the world reveal stories of courage and kindness, and, yes, great fear, suffering, and violence.

*Our prayer is contemplative,
embracing two movements:
one in silence and solitude ...
one in walking with, praying with,
and suffering with ...²*

And we pray our hearts open to hear and to bear the cries of the poor. We pray our hands and voices speak clearly for justice and that all may experience the touch of a merciful, compassionate, and loving God.

*In personal prayer God speaks to us within the deepest sanctuary of our being ...
In communal prayer the saving activity of God is manifested through our gathering together and sharing faith.²*

We celebrate the sacredness of time, finding a rhythm of prayer in our lives ...²



Prayer, living in the Presence of God, is as natural as breathing in the air surrounding us. As mind and heart come to stillness, words tend to fall away. We may have an experience of this, Presence, that is born of silence.

Listening to what stirs within you, how would you speak of prayer? What haiku or writing might you compose and share?

As you pray this poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, see if you recognize any part of yourself:

*She who reconciles the ill-matched threads
of her life, and weaves them gratefully
into a single cloth –
it's she who drives the loudmouths from the hall
and clears it for a different celebration*

*where the one guest is You.
In the softness of evening
it's You she receives.*

*You are the partner of her loneliness,
the unspeaking center of her monologues.
With each disclosure You encompass more
and she stretches beyond what limits her,
to hold You.³*

¹ 1 Cor 6:19

² Adrian Dominican Sisters Constitution and Statutes, page 24

³ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Love Poems to God*

CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING: HELPFUL GUIDELINES

At the heart of contemplation is the awakening to the presence of God in the human heart and in the universe. A community gathered in contemplative sitting is grace flowing for the community, for the church, and for the world.

To begin a contemplative sitting or meditation practice, you may find it helpful to:

- Find a space that calls you into quiet (light a candle or play a chant if it aids stillness).
- Set a specific time for your sitting: 5, 10, 20, or 30 minutes.
- Set an intention for the session, dedicating it to a situation, a person, or a quality needed to grow in our world, such as truth, justice, peace, forgiveness, or courage.
- Become aware of your whole body as you enter into the silence; follow its rising and falling as you breathe in and out. You may wish to say *In* as you breathe in and *Out* as you breathe out, or repeat a mantra, such as “Holy One” – breathing in *Holy* and breathing out *One* – or “*Maranatha*” (Aramaic for “Come Jesus”).
- Gently note each time your mind begins thinking or feeling or planning – and gently bring attention back to your breath or mantra.
- Give gratitude to yourself for the time you dedicated to contemplative sitting.

It is important to remember that contemplative sitting is not about achieving a particular feeling or experience. It is simply sitting in God's loving presence, coming into present moment, calming the mind by following your breath in and out or repeating your mantra. Contemplative sitting is an encounter with God in the midst of our daily lives.

– Esther Kennedy, OP

Esther conducts a monthly Day of Mindfulness at Weber Center.

